

Message Text

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APPROVED BY AF:DBEASUM

S/S - JPMOFFAT

NSC - HEHORAN

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FM SECSTATE WASHDC

TO ALL AFRICAN DIPLOMATIC POSTS

AMEMBASSY LONDON

AMEMBASSY PARIS

AMEMBASSY LISBON

AMCONSUL LUANDA

AMCONSUL LOURENCO MARQUES

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E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: PFOR, RH, OAU

SUBJECT: BYRD AMENDMENT: SITUATION REPORT

1. AS YOU AWARE, REPEAL OF BYRD AMENDMENT WHICH PASSED SENATE DECEMBER 1973 HAS BEEN PENDING BEFORE HOUSE SINCE REPEAL BILL REPORTED OUT OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS COMMITTEE WITH GOOD MAJORITY IN JUNE 27 AND APPROVED BY RULES COMMITTEE IN CLOSE VOTE AUGUST 6. EXPECTATION WAS THAT BILL WOULD BE CONSIDERED BY FULL HOUSE AUGUST 20. OVERLOADING OF CALENDAR CAUSED DEFFERAL OF ACTION UNTIL AUGUST 21.

2. FOLLOWING EXCHANGE TOOK PLACE AUGUST 20 IN WHITE HOUSE PRESS BRIEFING:

Q: CAN YOU TELL US WHAT THE PRESIDENT'S POSITION IS ON THE BYRD AMENDMENT REGARDING THE RHODESIAN CHROME SITUATION?

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MR. TER HORST:- YES, THE FORD ADMINISTRATION FAVORS REPEAL

OF THE BYRD AMENDMENT WHICH, AS YOU KNOW, WOULD RETURN THE UNITED STATES' POSITION TO THAT POSITION OF THE UNITED NATIONS.

Q: MAY I FOLLOW THAT, PLEASE? IS THE REASONING BECAUSE CHROME IS NO LONGER INVOLVED IN NATIONAL SECURITY? DO WE HAVE ENOUGH CHROME? WHAT IS THE RATIONALE BEHIND THE SWITCH IN HIS POSITION?

MR. TER HORST: I CAN'T GIVE YOU THE DETAILS, HELEN, BUT SECRETARY OF STATE KISSINGER TESTIFIED FOR THE REPEAL OF THE BYRD AMENDMENT AND I AM TOLD THAT WAS A RATHER FULL APPEARANCE BY THE SECRETARY IN GREAT DETAIL AND PERHAPS YOU COULD FIND IT IN THE TESTIMONY.

Q: CAN YOU TELL US WHETHER THE GOVERNMENT HAS TAKEN STEPS TO PREVENT RHODESIAN CHROME FROM FUNNELING OUT THROUGH SOUTH AFRICA INTO THE UNITED STATES?

MR. TER HORST: I CAN'T TELL YOU AT THE MOMENT, BUT I AM SURE IN TAKING THIS POSITION THAT THE GOVERNMENT OF THE UNITED STATES WILL LIVE UP NOT ONLY TO THE SPIRIT OF THE REPEAL IF INDEED IT IS REPEALED, BUT ALSO TO THE LETTER.

3. ON AUGUST 21 DECISION WAS MADE BY DEMOCRATIC AND REPUBLICAN PROPONENTS TO WITHDRAW REPEAL BILL FROM HOUSE CONSIDERATION THAT DAY. PROPONENTS ESTIMATE OF VOTE SHOWED THEM SIGNIFICANTLY SHORT OF FAVORABLE DECISION ON REPEAL.

4. HOUSE STRATEGISTS ARE STUDYING WHETHER TO BRING UP BILL AGAIN AFTER HOUSE RECESS (SCHEDULED FOR PERIOD AUGUST 23-SEPTEMBER 11) AND BEFORE OCTOBER RECESS FOR ELECTIONS. THERE IS SECOND POSSIBILITY THAT MATTER MIGHT BE CONSIDERED AFTER ELECTIONS IF PRESENT CONGRESS IS RE-CALLED IN SPECIAL SESSION BEFORE THE END OF THE YEAR.

5. ASSISTANT SECRETARY EASUM HELD MEETING AUGUST 22 WITH REPRESENTATIVES NINE AFRICAN EMBASSIES WHO PARTICULARLY ACTIVE IN SUPPORT BYRD REPEAL. AMBASSADORS LIMITED OFFICIAL USE
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OF SENEGAL, LIBERIA, GHANA, NIGERIA, ZAMBIA, ETHIOPIA AND OFFICERS OF KENYA, ZAIRE AND CAMEROON EMBASSIES WERE PRESENT. EASUM GAVE BACKGROUND ON REASONS FOR WITHDRAWAL OF VOTE, INCLUDING CONCERN OF PROPONENTS THAT DEFEAT MIGHT HAVE BEEN SEEN IN RHODESIA AS EXPRESSION OF SUPPORT FOR SMITH REGIME. EASUM ALSO OUTLINED PRESENT THINKING CONCERNING RETURN OF REPEAL BILL TO HOUSE LATER IN THE YEAR.

6. AFRICAN REPRESENTATIVES REFLECTED KEEN DISAPPOINTMENT

THAT HOUSE UNABLE VOTE REPEAL AT THIS TIME. THEY ALSO
INDICATED PLEASURE AT WHITE HOUSE STATEMENT OF AUGUST 20
AND ASKED THAT THEIR THANKS BE CONVEYED TO PRESIDENT FORD.

7. EASUM ASSURED AFRICAN DIPLOMATS THAT ADMINISTRATION
WILL CONTINUE TO WORK FOR REPEAL. KISSINGER

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